THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI AJIT SINGH): (a)Yes, Sir.

(b) As per the first advance estimates as on November 12, 2002, the Total production of kharif foodgrains during 2002-03 is expected to be 90.64 million tonnes, and the production of kharif oilseeds is expected to be 9.89 million tonnes. As the stock position of foodgrains in the country is much above the buffer norm, there is no crisis. This is also borne out by the fact that the Wholesale Price Index (Base 1993-94=100) in respect of foodgrains increased only marginally by 1.1 per cent over the year ended November 2, 2002. However, in order to enable the farmers to achieve higher levels of production and productivity a number of initiatives have been taken by the Government. These include promotion of watershed development, development and promotion of new technology, switch from conventional schematic approach to macro-management scheme to provide flexibility to states in addressing specific problems based on local requirements. As regards oilseeds, in addition to the measures aimed at promoting production and productivity, import of edible oils is allowed freely to bridge the gap between domestic production and availability.

(c) Keeping in view the need to compensate farmers for the losses suffered in unirrigated areas and the additional expenditure incurred in irrigated areas, the Government announced Special Drought Relief price ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 20 per quintal for kharif crops of 2002-03 season. States have been assisted through advance release in August 2002 of the Central Share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) due in November, 2002 amounting in all to Rs.1227.29 crores. Besides, 19.25 lakh tonnes of foodgrains free of cost have also been allocated for generation of relief employment. Besides, the High Level Committee has approved assistance of Rs.1999.14 crores to the various drought affected States subject, however, to adjustment of balances available in the CRF of these States.

Hike in tuition fees in Kendriya Vidyalayas

*79. DR. ABRAR AHMED: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC), set up by the Union Government has recommended a hike in the tuition fees in Kendriya Vidyalayas; if so, the details thereof; and

(b) whether Government have since accepted this recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI) : (a) and (b) Expenditure Reforms Commission (ERC) have recommended charging of a fee of around Rs. 200 to 300 in Kendriya Vidyalayas at Secondary Stage and a similar level of fee to be charged in Navodaya Vidyalayas from students belonging to families above poverty line. The recommendations of the ERC are under consideration of the Government of India.

Scrapping of Railway Projects

†*80. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister's Office has asked the Ministry of Railways to consider scrapping all those projects which were approved 10 years back or prior thereto but work has not started on them;

(b) if so, the State-wise and project-wise details thereof and the reasons for not starting the projects; and

(c) what is the reaction of the Ministry thereto?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Oilseeds production and price

331. SHRI C.O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of production and price per quintal of various oilseeds in the country during the period 1991—2001, year-wise;

(b) the details of edible oil imported into the country during the above period, year-wise;

---

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.